

GUIDELINES TO COMBAT CONDENSATION AND MOULD IN SERVICE FAMILIES ACCOMMODATION

Condensation is the water produced when warm moist air or steam meets a cold surface such as windows, walls or floors. It is sometimes so severe that householders believe their windows leak or that their house is structurally damp.

Condensation is often more of a problem in newer houses where doors and windows are more draught proof than in older properties, where there is central heating installed and there are no or fewer chimneys.

Condensation can cause mould growth on walls and can damage clothes and furnishings. Controlling it is a matter of reducing sources of water vapour to a minimum and finding the right balance between heating and ventilation in your particular house.

IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO CONTROL CONDENSATION IN YOUR QUARTER – here are some guidelines to help you.

MAIN CAUSES OF CONDENSATION

- Boiling Kettles and saucepans
- Washing and drying clothes
- Bathing
- Using paraffin and flueless gas heaters.

TO CONTROL CONDENSATION

- When washing and drying clothes or cooking, keep kitchen door shut and open window
- When bathing and after bathing, keep bathroom door shut and window open
- Air your house every day. Every window in the house should be open for at least 10 – 15 minutes each day except in the coldest weather
- Have bedroom windows slightly open at night, even the breath of a sleeping person contains a lot of water vapour
- Take advantage of dry, sunny days to give your house a good airing; and don't forget the cupboards
- Use extractor fans where fitted
- NEVER block up air bricks, flues or ventilators. THIS COULD BE DANGEROUS.

- If you use paraffin or flueless gas heaters, keep the windows open a little (every gallon of paraffin burned produces 1¼ gallons of water!)
- Keep your house warm (consistent with fuel economy requirements) even if you are out during the day.

DEALING WITH CONDENSATION AND MOULD

If you observe these measures, condensation will not be a serious problem but however careful you are, it may still occur to a lesser degree in certain weather conditions.

- Always mop up condensation (on windowsills for example) as soon as you notice it. If it spills over, it may cause mould on walls or damp patches on carpets that are difficult to dry out.
- If mould appears on walls or ceilings, wash it off carefully and straight away with a solution of one tablespoon of household bleach to a pint of warm water. If you give the mould spores time to get established, they will be more difficult to eradicate.
- If mould appears on clothes or furnishings, brush off and air thoroughly. (If you are not going to wear clothes for some time, it is a good plan to have them cleaned before putting them away, preferably hung in polythene sheaths. However, make sure the air can circulate in the sheath).
- Particular care should be taken to inspect for mould damage to walls behind portable wall units. These are often placed close to a wall, restricting the circulation of air which would normally dry off any moisture present on the surface so preventing mould growth. If mould spores are allowed to become established, the affected area needs to be given a fungicidal wash and decorated. This may be chargeable to the occupant.

FOLLOW THESE SIMPLE RULES AND YOU WILL NOT HAVE PROBLEMS